

WALWA DUDH CO-OPERATIVE SANGH: A HISTORICAL STUDY (1975 TO 1983)

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Abstract

Co-operation movement was introduced in India by social reformers in order to save people from the evil of money lenders and their malpractices. A large number of Indian people had been living in villages since ages. These people were uneducated, ignorant and unaware of agriculture and other development. This was the same situation of the people of Walwa taluka before independence. The paper attempts to consider the contribution of Walwa Dudh Sangh for the economic upliftment of Walwa taluka farmers.

Now-a-days the concept of history is changing. In ancient period history means biography of kings and great warriors. Historians wrote history on particular subject of the nation, state or region. But history was not written on specific area or Institution comprehensively. Recently historians have concentrated on contemporary social and economical conditions. Local histories have achieved extra-ordinary importance in the world. Scholars call the same as “New History.” Regarding this historian Hoskins, in his book, *Local History in England* states:

...so much of the past is visibly perishing before our eyes, more and more people have been led to take an interest in a particular place and wish to find out all about it. Some shallow-brained theorist would doubtless call this “escapism”, but the fact is that we are not born internationalists and there comes a time when the complexity and size of modern

problems leave us cold. We belong to a particular place and the bigger and more incomprehensible the modern world grows the more, will people turn to study something of which they can grasp the scale and in which they can find a personal and individual meaning (Hoskins :6)

In India also, by considering above aspects have achieved importance to local history. Establishment of the states in India on the basis of language has enhanced the same.

Co-operation movement was introduced in India by social reformers in order to save people from the evil of money lenders and their malpractices. A large number of Indian people had been living in villages since ages. These people were uneducated, ignorant and unaware of agriculture and other development. They were superstitious. This was the same situation of the people of Walwa taluka before independence. There was no economical source for the people; money lenders and the landlords were the principal sources of the rural people. These people were exploiting uneducated villagers.

To solve the economical problems of the farmers of Walwa taluka, Rajaram Bapu Patil decided to implement co-operation movement. He had realized that without co-operation movement, it was not possible to uplift the economical condition of the people. As the people were superstitious and uneducated, it was very difficult task. He had also realized that people should be trained regarding laws, rules and transactions to success the co-operative movement. So he went in every village of Walwa taluka, gathered the people and gave speeches regarding the importance of co-operative movement. In his speeches he made aware to the people the way they live their life. He explained the factors responsible for the critical economic condition of the rural area people. He systematically explained the solution for their economical problems. He explained the detail nature of transactions of the work of the co-operative society. He convinced people that co-operative society will help

them to uplift their economical conditions. He appealed in his speeches to get united apart from the walls of religion, caste and class. There were two challenges in front of him: first to unite and get the support of the people, second to point out active people to lead in the village. As Rajaram Bapu Patil was highly educated, people supported him with great enthusiasm.

To some extent Rajaram Bapu Patil was able to solve the economical problems of the farmers in Walwa taluka through Walwa Sugar Factory. The problems were solved of the farmers who have their own farming. The peasants, workers and small farmers were not able to rise up to the mark. Rajaram Bapu Patil was thinking of these people. These people were related to farming. They cannot do another work because they were uneducated and also ignore other skills. These people worked as farm workers. These people have their own buffaloes and cows. These people sold the milk to the small businessman who collected and sold to the private businessmen in the city. Unfortunately these farmers were not getting appropriate rate for the milk. There was a lot of exploitation of the farmers. To give justice to farmers' efforts, Rajaram Bapu Patil made proposal of Walwa Taluka Sahakari Dudh Sangh and submitted to the Maharashtra government. He prepared the Director Board of his sincere followers. Immediately it received the official sanction. Subsequently it was registered by the Deputy Registrar of the District Co-operative Society Sangli according to the office letter No SAN/D.G.121 dated 30th December 1975. (Walwa DUDH Sangh record) The milk project is located at Islampur MIDC. The project area is eleven acres. The working of the milk project was started on 19th February 1976. At the initial stage there were a few Milk Co-operative Societies in the villages of Walwa taluka. Like co-operative societies, Rajaram Bapu Patil made special efforts to establish at least one co-operative milk society (dairy) in every village of the taluka. The milk producers deliver his milk to this co-operative milk society. Through these co-operative milk

societies, milk was collected by Walwa Co-operative Dugh Sangh. At the initial stage near about 1400 liters milk was collected every day. For transportation, some vehicles were purchased and some were hired. In the beginning, the Sangh was collecting milk from village dairy societies and delivering it to government dairy, Miraj. However, milk rates offered by the government were less as compared to private dairies; so organization was unable to pay good prices to the farmers. The management faced lot of problems at the initial stage. But the successful attempt of sugar factory helped management to keep enthusiasm alive. In addition Rajaram Bapu Patil was with them. So they decided to struggle for the welfare of the farmers. They planned to develop self infrastructure.

The milk project adopted two tire system of procurement. The village co-operative society is responsible to purchase milk from individual milk producer. It delivers the same to the procurement vehicle. It also makes payment to the milk producers as per quality of milk. The village co-operative society plays an important role of mediator between the milk project and milk producers for various activities. Once the milk is delivered to the procurement vehicle, further responsibility of transportation, quality etc. is taken by the milk project. The management made the arrangement of different routes to collect the milk. Each route comprises of 5 to 8 societies. The Institution realized that if the village co-operative societies will be strengthened, it will be beneficial to increase the quantity of milk. So the management concentrated on strengthening the village co-operative dairies. They started offering prices to the socities who gave maximum and quality milk. Competition created among the dairy societies in the taluka helped to increase quantity and quality milk. Village Co-operative Societies also announced schemes to increase the quantity and quality of the milk. Walwa Dugh Sangh and local dairy together by partly share gave loan without interest to the farmers on the condition that concern farmer will deliver milk to that local dairy. This scheme has helped to increase milk quantrity to some

extent. Even though there was limitation to increase the quantity of milk as the whole land of Walwa taluka was not irrigated.

In order to provide the best nutrition for the cattle and to assist the producers in their overall development, 100 M.T. cattle feed plant was erected in 1983 by the management. The project is producing cattle feed in the form of pellet and mash which operates at its best capacity and is credited with ISO9002 certification. (Walwa Dudh record) This cattle feed is circulated through village co-operative societies to the farmers. The credit system is also made available by the management. The loan was decreased from the milk bill. This scheme has definitely helped to increase the quality and quantity of the milk.

Like Walwa Sugar Factory, Rajaram Bapu Patil was interested to start many departments in Walwa Dudh Sangh in order to flourish milk business in Walwa taluka. He desired to start processing of milk, veterinary services, cattle food and provide the services to the farmers of the taluka. But unfortunately it was not possible due to his party responsibility as he had to travelled all over Maharashtra. Even though, he was interested to start the same for the welfare of the farmers but he died unexpectedly. But the dream of Rajaram Bapu Patil was completed by his son, honorable Jayant Patil minister for Rural Development in Maharashtra State. Now the Walwa Dudh Sangh is equipped with milk processing unit, pasteurize, packing machine, storage tanks, cold store etc.. Veterinary service is provided within two hours to the farmers in the taluka on their demand. Now every day 150,000 liters milk is collected. Recently the project has started manufacturing shrikhand, ghee, flavoured milk. The dream of Rajaram Bapu Patil to start by product in milk project like sugar factory is fulfilled by his son, which has definitely helped to give maximum money to the milk producers.

Walwa Dudh Sangh was not progressed much upto 1983, but it helped to create confidence among the peasants and workers regarding best way of earning money. Peasants and workers, with their regular work, have one or two buffaloes. These animals helped them to some extent to solve their economical problems. Now farmers also have concentrated on the milk production. Farmers now consider milk production as business. Business point of view developed among the farmers is very important thing. Because there are a number of farmers in Walwa taluka who deliver 500 liter milk every day. The credit goes to Walwa Dudh Co-operative Sangh, who has erected foundation long back in 1975.

References

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